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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN UMEH COMMUNITY OF ISOKO SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of sociocultural factors on women empowerment. It was carried out in Umeh Community of Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State. The study adopted radical and cultural feminism as its theoretical framework. Questionnaire, ethnography and in-depth interview schedule were used to collect data from 400 respondents. The quantitative data were analysed in frequencies and percentages using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 while the qualitative data were analysed using manual thematic and content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that educational attainment of women is very low and that education contributes in raising the socioeconomic and political status of the few educated women in the study area. Again, the results indicated that tradition does not promote women property rights in the study area. It was therefore recommended among other things that efforts should be made by the government to provide education for the rural women, women should rise up to expectations and fight against the influence of sociocultural factors militating against their empowerment and the age-long inferior status the society bestows on them and that religious leaders should re-orientate the minds of their followers through doctrines and tenets contained in the religious texts that emphasise the equality of all beings to overcome and abolish patriarchy and adverse traditional practices that infringe on the rights of women.

Keywords: Influence, Sociocultural factors, Women, Women Empowerment, Umeh Community.

Introduction

The issue of women empowerment is very fundament in contemporary discourse in development and democratization worldwide. This is because the women are an important part of the 'whole' societal system. Women empowerment is advocated by the World Bank and the United Nations as a prominent and important channel for improving child welfare, school enrolment, reducing gender disparity and poverty and thus promoting economic growth and good governance (Kabeer, 2012).

The phrase "women empowerment" is used pervasively in the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment space (and beyond); it is generally in the context of issues like economic empowerment, political participation, and girl child education. In line with Sustainable Development Goals and according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition, decent and productive empowerment for women means opportunities that allow for economic empowerment and advancement of women in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity by taking measures to combat discrimination and to promote equal access and opportunities (Global Affairs Canada, 2017).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2012), marginalisation of the girl-child was due to cultural and economic constraints militating against women empowerment thereby preventing them from participating in decisions that affect them. They are shared beliefs, values, norms and attitudes that are characteristics of a particular community or society. Socio-cultural factors are reflected in the patterns of behaviour, beliefs, preferences, customs and traditions which account for gender-based differences within a society. Socio-cultural factors are more sustainable and less affected by external changes. They provide an opportunity for empowerment based on unique advantages or changes.

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and women constitute about half of the national population of Nigeria but women empowerment is very low (Gender Training and Development Network, 2010). One of the key reasons usually given to explain the relative disempowerment of Nigerian women is the innate patriarchal system and 'the age-long inferior status the society bestows on women (Sani, 2010). The innate patriarchal system is accompanied by certain social and cultural norms, some of which are integrated into customary law and infringe on the rights of women. It is against this background that the study examined the influence of sociocultural factors on women empowerment in Umeh Community of Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, there is a patriarchal culture where men dominate all spheres of women's lives which have prompted various forms of gender-based discrimination (Okpalaobi 2011). The constitution of Nigeria guaranteed gender equality, yet women face various obstacles in matters involving their empowerment. The Nigerian political system has since its recognition in the global space as a legitimate unit of governance in 1960, unequivocally been dominated and controlled by men with little to almost no presence of women in both elective and appointive positions of government (Oloyede, 2016).

In spite of the efforts of the government at integrating the women's question into the development agenda, gender inequalities remain pervasive within most Nigerian societies. This is as a result of general lack of implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation which may be attributed to the vagueness of the federal constitution which gives more credence to men, the lack of general awareness, the pervasive influence of cultural and religious norms which impede the enforcement of the equality legislation, and the limited scope of the law (Osunde&Olokooba, 2014).

According to (Omoyibo, Egharevba&Iyanda, 2010), many women have suffered varied traumatic experiences arising from neglect which have manifested itself in gender inequality

and discrimination that has far-reaching implications for the empowerment of rural women in Nigeria. Globally, land and other forms of real property are essential for the economic empowerment of women across different cultural contexts (Gottlieb, Grossman & Robinson, 2018). Despite the growing global concerns for, and efforts at protecting women's rights to land and other tangible assets that possess economic value, various studies reveal that, women still encounter challenges with respect to these rights (Anyogu&Okpalobi, 2016; Akinola, 2018; Chaves, 2018).

Even though rural women contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of their communities, they continue to face major socio-cultural challenges which limit their empowerment potentials. These barriers range from cultural to religious, traditional, and legal discrimination (Sanusi, 2012). Several studies have explored empowerment of women through education, increasing credit access, empowerment interventions through cooperatives, micro-finance among others (Kabeer, 2012; Fapohunda, 2011, Department for International Development (DFID, 2014) and Ekundayo). However, this study examined the extent that education affects women status, social organisation influences women political participation and how tradition influence how women's access to property in Umeh community of Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Significance of the Study

This study would be significant as it will add to the pool of knowledge in the social phenomenon being investigated. The existing theory on the subject matter may be disproved, or totally rejected or amended in consonance with the socio-political and economic realities of a developing society like Umeh community. This study is relevant because the methods used in this study may be a reference point to similar studies. In other words; the empirical methods of a study of this nature will definitely enhance future studies. Hence, the other researchers that may be interested in this topical issue will find the methods here very handy and appropriate as a starting point or as a guide.

This study will be significant to the researcher because it will help to broaden the knowledge horizon of the researcher on the issues relating to empowerment and women empowerment thereby serving as an avenue for the researcher to contribute his quota towards understanding and developing viable strategies aimed at encouraging women empowerment in our society. The government can use the findings of this study to assist in policy formulation and development for a framework in terms of personal and organisational-related challenges, economic, social, cultural, and legal or administrative and other factors that affect women empowerment.

The findings of this study will make a veritable tool for policy makers and other institutions on how to encourage the establishment or expansion of women empowerment programmes in Nigeria and beyond. The ministry of women affairs and social development can also use the findings of this study to help build a Nigerian society that guarantees equal access to social, economic and wealth creation opportunities to all irrespective of gender.

Prior to this study, it is indisputable that existing knowledge, facts, and data on socio-cultural factors influencing women empowerment did not abound in this study area. However, the gaps created by lack of in-depth study of this subject matter in Umeh community of Isoko

South Local Government Area of Delta State were filled by the findings of this study. In this context, this study will be very relevant in that, it will add to existing knowledge not only on the issue being investigated but also on the study area.

Research Methodology

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in Umeh community of Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. Umeh is located in the northwestern part of the Western Niger Delta of Nigeria. Geographically, Umeh inhabit the area enclosed roughly by longitude 60 5'and 60 25' East and latitudes 5^0 15' and 5^0 40' North with a land mass of 278 mi (448 km). It is located within the tropical rainforest zone with rainfall of over 1,700 mm per annum. It shares its boundaries with Uzere on the East, Enwhe and Owodokpokpo on the South, Ave, Erowa and Patani on the South-East and Ohoror on the North. Its inhabitants are mainly Isoko with Christianity and African Traditional Religion (ATR) being the two dominant religions. Umeh is made up of seven quarters, namely; Afieki, Uru-Eghale, Ete-Ivie, Oto-Uloho, Oto-Oriwo, Oto-Otiehe and Uru-Oghene quarters. Afieki and Uru-Oghene are the two largest and most populous quarters. Umeh is also delimited into Erowa/Umeh ward 08.

The choice of Umeh community as the area for this study is informed by a number of factors. Firstly, the area is predominantly rural, thus suitable for the study. Secondly, the area has the most feasibility advantage to the researcher because of him being conversant with it. Lastly, the area is chosen in order to fill a gap in research as no study has specifically examined the influence of sociocultural factors in relation to rural women empowerment in the area.

The population of study included the entire population of women who fall within the labour force population aged (15-64) who were residents in Umeh community of Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Sample Size

For the purpose of the study, the Taro Yamane (1967) sample size formular was adopted. The formular for Taro Yamane sample size is thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population of study

e = error margin = 0.05

Since the study population is given as 621, the error margin is = 0.05; therefore, the sample size for the study is calculated thus:

$$n = \frac{621}{(1+621\,(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{621}{622\,(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{621}{1.555}$$

n = 399.36

Approximately, n = 400

That is, the sample size = 400

Sampling Technique procedure

The study made use of multi-stage sampling which involves both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. In the first stage, for the questionnaire respondents, the stratified sampling technique was used to stratify the seven (7) existing quarters in Umeh community - Uru-Eghale, Ete-Ivie, Oto-Uloho, Oto-Oriwo and Oto-Otiehe, Uru-Oghene and Afieki quarters into compound heads.

In the second stage, the systematic sampling technique was used to select five compound heads in each of the seven quarters, making a total of thirty-five compound heads in the community. In the third stage, the simple random technique was used to select three compound heads from each quarter, making a total of twenty-one compound heads in the entire study area. In the fourth stage, the snow balling sampling technique was used. By this technique, those compound heads that have relatives outside the quarters were identified and made known. Those that were initially known by the researcher in turn provided information of those they know in the same quarters and within the community. This went on, until the numbers of respondents were achieved.

For the collection of qualitative data (in-depth interview), the purposive sampling technique was used to select eight (8) respondents. This is because the researcher intends to select the sample with predetermining criteria that would satisfy the requirement of the research purpose. The chairperson of the women association of Umeh community and the seven (7) women leaders of each of the seven (7) quarters constituted the in-depth interview (IDI) respondents, thus making a total of eight (8) respondents. This is because the information needed here requires key informants to supply. The use of multi-stage sampling approach in the study was to ensure adequate representation of the study population as well as to elicit more detail information thereby enhancing the reliability of the findings.

Method of Data Collection

The data collection approach consisted of the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods using the instruments of questionnaire, ethnography and in-depth interview schedule. The reason for using the combination of both methods was to enable the researcher gain comprehensive understanding of the issues involved in the study. On the quantitative part, seven research assistants who are literates and residents in Umeh community who understand English language and could speak the indigenous language were recruited in each of the quarters and trained on the contents, objectives and methodology of the study. This was necessary so as to enable them interpret the items of the interview guide to non-literate respondents in their local dialect as well as translate their responses into English language. Each of the seven research assistants was allocated to one quarter in the study area for questionnaire administration.

The in-depth interview guide involving a one-time survey was used to collect the qualitative data. Three research assistants were recruited and trained for the qualitative data collection. The three qualitative research assistants worked together as a team. Two of them took notes, while the interview was going on; the third one monitored the tape recorder while the interviewees were being asked the interview questions. In total, the study had ten research assistants. The interviewees were informed in advance about the date and purpose of the interview.

Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data was processed, computed and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency tables were used to present the data. The qualitative data was analysed by first translating the interviews into English where applicable. Then, attempts were made to identify and code the key concepts and the indigenous categories. The coded responses from the different respondents were compared to bring out the differences and similarities that required explanation. After identifying the themes, they were coded and analysed using manual thematic and content analysis.

Result of Analysis

Analysis of Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by age (n = 400)

Age Range	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
15-24 years	80	20
25-34 years	71	17.75
35-44 years	105	26.25
45-54 years	100	25
55-64 years	44	11
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table1 shows the age distribution of respondents. The age distribution of respondents was categorised in ten – year internals giving a total of five age categories. The table shows that the highest percentage of respondents was with the age range of 35 –44 representing 26.25%. It was closely followed by age 45 – 54 which recorded 25%. Age 15-24 recorded 20%; age 25-34 recorded 17.75% while the least age range was 55-64 which recorded 11%.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by marital status (n = 400)

Marital Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Single	92	23
Married	159	39.75
Separated	31	7.75
Divorced	41	10.25
Windowed	77	19. 25
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table 2 above shows that 159 (39.75%) of the respondents were married, 92 (23%) were single, 77 (19.25%) were windowed, 41 (10.25%) were divorced and 31 (7.75%) were separated. This result is not surprising as most women marry early in the rural areas.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by religious affiliation (n = 400)

Religious Affiliation	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Christianity	381	95.25
Islam	0	0
African Traditional Religion	17	4.25
Others	2	0.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table 3 above shows that Christianity had the highest respondents with 381 (95.25%), followed by African Traditional Religion with respondents 17 (4.25%), others had respondents 2 (0.25), while Islam had 0 respondent with (0%). The lopsidedness of this result is not strange because Christianity is generally the dominant religion in the south –south and is uncommon to see Muslims in the remotest parts of Isoko communities.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of respondents by educational Attainment (n = 400)

Educational Attainment	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
No formal Education	91	22.75
Primary Education	221	55.25
Secondary Education	75	18.75
Tertiary Education	13	3.25
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

On educational attainment, table 4 above shows that 221 (55.25 %) of the respondents had primary education, 91(22.75 %) of the respondents had no formal, 75 (18.75 %) of the respondents had secondary education, while 13 (3.25%) of the respondents had tertiary education. This shows that majority of the women in the study area stopped at primary education. The reason for this may be due to the fact that the only secondary school in the study area was founded in the year 2006. Another reason could perhaps be the high cost of tertiary education.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of respondents by occupation (n = 400)

Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Civil Servants	7	1.75
Self-employed	11	2.75
Traders	13	3.25
Unemployed	54	13.5
Students	4	1
Apprentice	5	1.25
Full House Wives	3	0.75
Farmers	301	75.25
Others	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table 5 above shows that 301 (75.25%) of the respondents were farmers, 54 (13.5%) were unemployed, 13 (3.25%) were into trading, 11 (2.75%) were self-employed, 7 (1.75%) were civil servants, 5 (1.25 %) were apprentice, 4 ((1%) were students, 3 (0.7%) were full time house wives, while others were 2 (0.5). This shows that the greater percentage of respondents is farmers. This perhaps, is because of the location of the community in the rural area.

Objective one: To ascertain the extent education affects women status in Umeh community, Delta State.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of respondents on how lack of education by women discourages their empowerment (n = 400)

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly Agree	274	68.5
Agree	116	29
Disagree	2	0.5
Strongly Disagree	1	0.25
Don't Know	7	1.75
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

In table 6 above, 274 (68.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment, 116 (29%) of the respondents agreed that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment, 7 (1.75%) of the respondents responded they don't know that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment, 2 (0.5) of the respondents disagreed that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment, while 1 (0.25%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment. This therefore shows that more respondents were of the opinion that lack of education by women discourages their empowerment.

This finding seems to agree with the findings of the qualitative data where most of the respondents were of the view that education is a key to human capital development. As stated by the respondents:

> *Educated women are at advantage. The few educated women in our community gain more recognitions than their opposite counterparts who are not educated. Not only that, education is a key to all round development of the society.*

Objective two: To find out if social organisation influences women political participation in Umeh community, Delta State.

Table 7: Percentage distribution of respondents on how involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation (n = 400)

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly Agree	203	50.75
Agree	185	46.25
Disagree	7	1.75
Strongly Disagree	3	0.75
Don't Know	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table 7 above shows that 203 (50.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation, 185 (46.25%) of the respondents agreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation, 7(1.75%) of the respondents disagreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation, 3 (0.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation, while 2 (0.5%) of the respondents responded they don't know that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation. This result shows that more women were of the view that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation.

This finding was also confirmed by the qualitative data where the respondents stated that

> *"in Umeh community, most women who belong to different associations occupy appointive political positions within the community and are well informed of the political happenings than women who do not belong to any. Besides, during elections, these women who are members of informal organisations usually benefit more in the sharing of whatever that is brought to our community"*

Objective three: To examine the influence of tradition on women's access to property in Umeh community, Delta state.

Table 8: Percentage distribution of respondents on how women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community (n = 400)

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly Agree	102	25.5
Agree	96	24
Disagree	89	22.25
Strongly Disagree	91	22.75
Don't Know	22	5.5
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, July, 2021

Table 8 above shows that 102 (25.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community, 96 (24%) of the respondents agreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community, 91 (22.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community, 89 (22.25%) of the respondents disagreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community, while 22 (5.5%) of the respondents responded they don't know that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community. This result clearly shows that more respondents were of the opinion that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community. This finding agrees with the qualitative data where the respondents were asked if tradition allows equal property right for males and females in Umeh community and the place of women in terms of property ownership and inheritance. According to the respondents:

> *Tradition does not give equality of property ownership to both men and women in Umeh community. Even in terms of property inheritance, the most they can do is to give the woman from the abundance of the husband and the wife's family. Indeed, women have no voice in terms of property rights and inheritance in Umeh community.*

Discussion of Findings

Based on the analysis of the data collected from the field, a number of findings were made which addressed the research questions and objectives of the study. On education and status of women in the area, the findings revealed that education increases the socioeconomic and political status of women in the area. This was arrived at by the response of the respondents. 275 (68.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that education increases the socioeconomic and political status of women, while 120 (30%) of the respondents agreed that education increases the socioeconomic and political status of women. On the other hand, only 2 (0.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that education increases the socioeconomic and political status of women. This shows that most of the respondents indicated that education increases the socioeconomic and political status of women in the area. This finding was substantiated with the findings of the qualitative data where most of the respondents were of the view that education is a key to human capital development.

The result of the findings is in line with Parveen (2005) findings in her study in rural Bangladesh which revealed that both formal and informal education have positive significant impact on women status. It also revealed that education and skill improve the socio-economic condition of women and enable them to demand and protect their rights more effectively. This view is also supported by the findings of (Heaton, Huntsman & Flake, 2005) that indicated that educated and literate women have greater access to information and knowledge that increase their chances for paid jobs, other benefits and resources. The findings further revealed that promotion of girls' education along with socio-economic development enhances job opportunities for educated women that lead them towards empowerment. These findings also indicate that there is a close link between education, job, and women's status.

Another objective of the study was to find out if social organisation influences women political participation in the study area. The findings revealed that 203 (50.75%) of the respondents strongly agreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation and 185 (46.25%) of the respondents agreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation while only 3 (0.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that involvement of women in social organisation influences their political participation. This finding was also confirmed by the responses of the in-depth interview where the respondents stated that in the study area, most women who belong to different associations occupy appointive political positions within the community and are well informed of the political happenings than women who do not belong to any.

The results of the findings are in conformity with the findings of Becker, Israel, Schulz, Parker & Klem, (2002) who stated that women who were members of any social organisation had greater influence at their neighbourhoods as compared to the non-members. These findings confirmed that enhancement of women participation in community-based and non-governmental organisations are essential elements for women political participation. This view was supported by Parveen (2007) who suggested that informal women groups in rural areas are the one of the sources of women political participation because group involvement facilitates greater mobility outside the home and their access to media which eventually promote their political participation.

The study also sought to examine the influence of tradition on women's access to property in the study area. The findings revealed that that 326 (81.5%) of the respondents disagreed that tradition does not promote women property right in, while only 74 (18.5%) of the respondents agreed that tradition promotes women property right in the study area. This result shows that more respondents were of the opinion that tradition does not promote women property right in Umeh community. This perhaps could be attributed to the strict observance of traditions in the area. On the basis of women's rights to property and inheritances, 102 (25.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families, 96 (24%) of the respondents agreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in while 91 (22.75%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in study area. This result clearly shows that more respondents were of the opinion that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families in Umeh community.

This finding agreed with the responses of the in-depth interview where the respondents were asked if tradition allows equal property right for males and females in Umeh community and the place of women in terms of property ownership and inheritance. Majority of the interviewees responded that tradition does not give equality of property ownership to both men and women in Umeh community. Even in terms of property inheritance, the most they can do is to give the woman from the abundance of the husband and the wife's family and women have no voice in terms of property rights and inheritance in Umeh community.

This view is supported by (Ajayi&Olotuah, 2005) who stated that women's rights to property and inheritances are restricted within the natal and matrimonial families. In furtherance to the above, they also opined that women's experiences in acquiring or inheriting land and other

property in Nigeria are filled with narratives of denial and marginalisation. The above finding is also in consonance with the views of Adekile (2010) who argued that tradition discriminates against women in Nigeria and Africa as a continent.

Conclusion

The issue of women empowerment has been considered very fundament in contemporary discourse in development and democratization worldwide and has been advocated by the World Bank and the United Nations as a prominent and important channel for improving child welfare, school enrolment, reducing gender disparity and poverty and thus promoting economic growth and good governance. The influence of sociocultural factors has adversely affected the overall empowerment of rural women and is manifested clearly their low economic, political and social status. Finally, there has been growing gender inequality in terms of access to property and inheritance that is attributed to the influence of tradition.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should provide education for the rural women. There is need for enhance academic scholarship programmes to rural women at the tertiary education level. This will enable more rural women acquire tertiary education.
2. Adult education, especially for the girl child should be encouraged; at least rural girls will have opportunity of gaining a brighter future.
3. Rural women that could not have the opportunity to attend to school should be empowered by providing them with vocational training that will help them to develop skills to enable them earn their living.
4. Women are encouraged to join inform organisations. This will help them develop political culture, thereby enhancing their political participation.
5. Women are encouraged to rise up to expectations and fight against the influence of sociocultural factors militating against their empowerment and the age-long inferior status the society bestows on them.
6. Traditional rulers should promote gender equity in their various communities. There is need to put a stop to adverse traditional practices that do not enhance gender equality in terms of access and ownership of property. This is necessary to address the one-sidedness access and ownership of property which tends to favour the males.
7. There is need to strengthen and protect women's rights by religious leaders by re-orienting the minds of their followers through doctrines and tenets contained in the religious texts. Through the doctrinal teachings of religious leaders that emphasise the equality of all beings, regardless of gender, the human mind will be conditioned to overcome and abolish patriarchy and adverse traditional practices that infringe on the rights of women.

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